



July 17, 2019

Sent via email to 69702-15750474@requests.muckrock.com

Russ Kick
MuckRock News
DEPT MR 69702
411A Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Dear Mr. Kick,

This is the final response to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request you submitted to the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Mission Area FOIA Office on February 24, 2019. Your REE FOIA request was assigned tracking number 2019-REE-02392-F. You requested the "...agency's FOIA request log covering 2018, which includes a field showing the subject of each request and a field for the final disposition."

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552

The REE FOIA Office conducted a search for responsive records in the FOIAXpress tracking system for requests received between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018 (FY 2018). The search identified fourteen (14) pages of records that are responsive to your request.

REE has determined that certain information contained in the responsive record set should be withheld pursuant to FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). Below is an explanation of the information that has been withheld.

FOIA Exemption 6

Exemption 6 generally is referred to as the "personal privacy" exemption. It provides that the disclosure requirements of the FOIA do not apply to "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." Application of the exemption involves balancing the public's interest in disclosure against individuals' privacy interests.

The information withheld under Exemption 6 consists of names associated with personnel or private information, and non-public contact information. This information qualifies as "similar files" because it is information in which individuals have a privacy interest. Moreover, releasing the information could subject the individuals to unwarranted or unsolicited communications. Since there is a viable privacy interest that would be threatened by disclosure, Exemption 6 authorizes this office to withhold the information. Accordingly, we have determined that the public interest in the information's release does not outweigh the overriding privacy interests in keeping it confidential.

You may administratively appeal this determination by writing to the Administrator, ARS, USDA, Room 302-A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, 14th & Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250. Your appeal must be postmarked within 90 days of the date of the response to your request. The phrase "FOIA Appeal" should be placed in capital letters on the front of the envelope containing the appeal.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact the REE FOIA Office at 301-504-1655 or electronically at REEfoia@ars.usda.gov. You may also reach our FOIA Public Liaison or FOIA Requester Service Center at 301-504-1743 or REEfoia@ars.usda.gov.

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about its FOIA mediation services. The contact information for OGIS is: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001; ogis@nara.gov; 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

Sincerely,

JD Wyllie

JD Wyllie
Director
Office of Communications

Enclosure: 14 pages